SPEECH

MR. BREESE, OF ILLINOIS,

THE OREGON QUESTION.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, MONDAY, MARCH 2, 1846.

THE OREGON QUESTION.

he Senate proceeded to the consideration of the Special Order, being the joint resolution of the Committee on Foreign Relations, proposing to give notice to Great Britain of the desire of the Government of the United States to annul and abrogate the treaty for the joint occupancy of the Oregon territory, and the resolutions of Messrs, Hannegan, Calhoun, and Crittenden, relating to the same subject.

matter; and the House of Representatives has performed its duty. It now only remains for the Senate to perform its duty, by consummating the action of both.

It is, Mr. President, in view of the great interest the State from which I come has in this question, and in obedience to an overruling sense of duty to it, that I am now prompted to address the Senate. I did not know, sir, until this morning, that the General Assembly of my State had, at its last session, adopted the resolutions just presented by my colleague, [Mr. Semple,] and read by the Secretary. I was ware, sir, that two years since, similar resolutions had been adopted and presented here; and two years since, it was my duty and my pleasure, here in my place, to respond to them, and to express the views I then entertained of the subject, and of the obligations resting upon Congress to carry out the wishes of that State, and those of other States who had conveyed here, similar expressions of the public will. These resolutions, sir, read here at this moment, but strengthen me in the determination I had formed to vote for some resolution to annul and abrogate the conventions of 1818 and 1827, and to follow it up, by pressing such other measures as should place our citizens beyond the Rocky mountains under the protection of our laws; incorporate the country into our Union; protect the emigrant on his way to its fertile plains, and pledge to all who seek them, the honor and faith of the Government that they shall be made secure in their posessions by perfect grants of land, at the earliest period within the competency of the Government to act, consistent with treaty stipulations. And I cannot but hope that my conduct in these regards will be approved by the State of Illinois, whose will and teelings and opinions I take pleasure in reflecting.

In that State, sir, there is but one opinion; nay, sir, in the entire Northwest, so lar as I am informed, (and I have paid much attention to the manifestations of the public mind,) there is no difference of opinion the Siste from which I come has in this question, and the collection to the control of the control of the collection of

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American colonies, long prior to the conquest of Canada, which extended from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean, and covered by their broad and comprehensive description the whole of the territory west of the Rocky mountains, from 34 to 62 degrees north latitude. That to Virginia, by James the First, bears date May 23, 1609; it erects the colony into a body corporate and politic, and the grant is thus expressed:—
"We do give, grant and confirm, unto the said treasurer and company and their successors, all those lands, countries, and territories, situate, lying and being in that part of America called Virginia, from the point of land called Cape or Point Comfort all along the seacoast to the northward two hundred miles, and from the said point of Cape Comfort all along the seacoast to the southward two hundred miles, and all that space and circuit of land lying from the seacoast of the precinct aforesaid up into the land, throughout from sea to sea, uset and worthwest, and also all the islands lying within one hundred miles along the coast of both seas of the precinct aforesaid: to have and to hold, possess and enjoy, all and singular the said lands, countries and territories, with all and singular the premises by these presents granted or mentioned to be granted to them, their successors and assigns, forever."

The first charter of 1606 extended along the seacoast from the 34th to the 41st degree of north latitude, but only fifty miles inland. The third, dated in 1612, annexed to Virginia all the islands within three hundred leagues of the coast; and although this charter of 1609, with the other two, were vacated by quo warranto in 1624, yet a commission issued for the Government of the Colony of Virginia in the boundaries as established by the charter of 1609.

Grants to Lord Baltimore and to William Penn curtailed this colony on the north, but the western

coular and powerful force. She was enabled to write this law with the point of her sword; and to interpolate the code of public law in a manner to suit herself. In this matter of international law, sir, the great moral law which should govern nations as well as individual man, is not unfrequently disregarded as right, and power compels obedience to the most odious principles, which, from the forced acquiescence of the weak, become in time to be regarded as right, and power compels obedience to the most odious principles, which, from the forced acquiescence of the weak, become in time to be regarded as fundamental principles of international law. No nation, sir, has been more uniformly successful than freat British and the secondary of the secondary, in a national ship, fitted out for the purpose, by Perez in 1774, of the Pacific coast of Cregon as far north as the northwest point of Washington Islands, as claimed by the United States, including also Nootka and Vancouver's labout the secondary of the secondary o

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ously concluded:"It will not be denied," he said, "that the main

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